



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Governance & Audit Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 14 December 2021 at 10.00 am

Present: Paula O'Connor (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
P R Hood-Williams
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

P M Black
M B Lewis
J A Raynor

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
C E Lloyd
T M White

Lay Member

Julie Davies

Officer(s)

Simon Cockings
Adam Hill
Sarah Lackenby
Jeremy Parkhouse
Richard Rowlands
Ben Smith
Debbie Smith

Chief Auditor
Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
Chief Digital & Transformation Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager
Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Deputy Chief Legal Officer

Also Present

Justine Morgan Audit Wales

Apologies for Absence

J W Jones and L V Walton

57 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

58 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 9 November 2021 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment: -

Minute No.43 – Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests – Amend paragraph 2) as follows: -

'Julie Davies declared a personal interest in Minute No.46 – Response to the Community Equipment Stores and Community Alarms Service Audit Report 2021/22'.

59 Annual Complaints Report 2020-21.

Sarah Lackenby, Chief Transformation Officer presented a 'for information' report which provided assurance on the complaints handling process and the performance of complaints. The report also highlighted the number of complaints received by the Council and the Public Services Ombudsman Wales (PSOW) during 2020-21.

It was recognised that this was a very challenging year due to Covid-19 which impacted on the number of complaints received and comparisons with the previous year's performance were reported in that context.

It was highlighted that despite the impact of Covid-19, the Council still made some good progress during the year as follows: -

- The Complaints Policies were reviewed to ensure they were in line with the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019;
- The Complaints Team received training directly from the PSOW;
- A new IT system was underway to make the process easier for the public and more efficient for staff with improved reporting functionality. This would be live and staff would be trained for the start of the new financial year.

It was noted that the monitoring of the complaints handling process was added to the Committee terms of reference and the revised terms of reference were presented as part of the Audit Charter report in April 2021.

The report provided details on the following: -

- Corporate stage 1 complaints (informal);
- Corporate stage 2 complaints;
- Social Services complaints;
- Cases reported to the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales);
- Welsh Language complaint.

Appendix A provided the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Annual Letter 2020-21.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- The positive performance of Education complaints;
- The development of the IT system to enable much improved monitoring and would allow delegated bodies funded by the Council, to provide their results;
- Assurances being provided regarding actions being implemented and the processes followed, involving Heads of Service / agreeing an action plan / changing working practices / responding to PSOW;
- Confirmation that actions listed in Appendix A had been completed.

The Chair welcomed the report and stated that it was important not to overlap the work of Scrutiny. It was noted that Scrutiny had not discussed Social Services complaints to date but were scheduled to discuss them in March 2022. She added that additional KPI information would be required in future and once the IT system was available, it would provide a much richer source of information.

60 Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council.

Justine Morgan, Audit Wales presented 'for information' the Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea.

The report detailed the quarterly update and listed the following: -

- Financial Audit Work
- Performance Audit Work
- Local Government National Studies Planned / In Progress
- Estyn
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Audit Wales National Reports and Other Outputs Published Since 1 April 2021
- Audit Wales National Reports and Other Outputs Due to be Published During 2021-22 (and other work in progress / planned)
- Forthcoming Good Practice Exchange Events and Publications

The Chair thanked the Audit Wales representative for providing the report and noted that it was important the Committee was aware of the work programme and timetable in order to further investigate and seek assurance. She also requested that the Audit Wales representative circulates any examples of good practice to the Committee.

The Chair asked that the Action Tracker report / Work Plan be updated to include the quarterly Audit Wales update report and any Audit Wales reports applicable to the Council.

61 Governance & Audit Committee Action Tracker.

The Governance & Audit Committee Action Tracker was reported 'for information'.

A typographical error was noted regarding actions relating to the Committee meeting held on 09/11/2021 which were listed as 11/09/2021 and would be amended prior to the next meeting.

The Chair asked for the following to be added to the Tracker Report: -

- Minute No.46 – Response to the Community Equipment Stores & Community Alarms Service Audit Report 2021/22

'The Chair asked the Internal Audit Section to include a Review of the Performance Management Arrangements" to be included in their follow-up review'.

62 Governance & Audit Committee Work Plan.

The Governance & Audit Committee Work Plan was reported 'for information'.

The Chair asked that the work plan be updated with the following:

- The items listed in the Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable that are applicable to the Authority, be added to the Work Plan;
- The items listed in Appendix 4 be added to the Work Plan;
- Committee training post May 2022 be included in the Work Plan, subject to dates being agreed by the Democratic Services Committee.

The meeting ended at 10.29 am

Chair